

Safeguarding Team

Designated Teacher – Mr D McVeigh

Deputy Designated Teacher – Mrs F Coyne

Chair of Board of Governors – Mr T Murphy

Designated Governor for Child Protection – Mrs P Murray



St Colmcille's High School
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Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

St. Colmcille's High School seeks to promote a safe and secure environment in which pupils can learn and in which they feel supported.

We aim to:

- Create a caring Christian relationship between staff and pupils and between the school and the community,
- Acknowledge the 'in loco parentis' position of all teachers,
- Provide a unified whole school approach for the development of the child as an individual,
- Develop and maintain an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect,
- Foster an atmosphere of trust in which individuals feel able to approach a sensitive and caring member of staff and be confident of an appropriate response,
- Equip our pupils with the skills they need for responsible parenthood,
- Help our pupils to be confident in coping effectively in a potential abuse situation.

St. Colmcille's High School policy and procedures comply with the Department of Education requirement as laid down in Circular 1999/10 and the Education Authority (EA) and CCMS procedures.

All staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. **We have a Designated Teacher** whose role is to co-ordinate child protection procedures within the school and to liaise with outside agencies and a **Deputy Designated Teacher**.

Partnership with Parents

The school will help parents to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all young people in its charge. This is an aspect of the ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationship with Parents/Guardians/Carers who will be reminded annually, of the importance of notifying the school **in writing** when parental and emergency contact addresses and telephone numbers change. Parents/Guardians/Carers are also encouraged to follow the correct procedures of notifying the school **in writing** explaining the reason for a change in the student's day i.e. leaving school early or late coming to school. Additionally, any absence from school needs to be explained **in writing** on the first day of return to school, as outlined in our Pastoral Policy and procedures. The school has the right to refuse to let a student out of school if the correct procedures are not followed.

Parents / Carers can raise a concern about their child or another child in the school following the procedures set out in this policy. The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher will take receipt of the concern and take action accordingly. If further detail or clarification is required at any further point, the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher may need to speak with you again.

Vetting of Staff

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. All newly appointed staff are vetted through ACCESS NI, an organisation who have been appointed by EA and CCMS. The staff of our school has also adopted a Code of Conduct for our behaviour towards pupils. This Code is set out at the end of this policy.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, substitute teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on safeguarding and child protection. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child

is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

Work Experience

Pupils participating in work experience will be given the necessary guidance and preparation regarding behaviour, conduct and dress prior to and after work placement.

What is child abuse?

We use the following definitions:

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinements to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

Exploitation is the intentional ill treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation for personal gain.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and these abuse(s) may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

Young Person whose Behaviour places them at Risk of Significant Harm – a child whose own behaviours, such as alcohol consumption or consumption of illegal drugs, whilst placing the child at risk of significant harm, may not necessarily constitute abuse as defined for the purposes of the Child Protection Procedures. If the child has achieved sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up his own mind then the decision to initiate child protection action in such cases is a matter for professional judgement and each case should be considered individually. Professionals should though be alert to the possibility that a young person may be engaged in certain risky behaviours as a result of other adverse experiences in their lives which may be indicative of abuse.

The Role of Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Every school is required to have a Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher with responsibility for Child Protection. This is a highly skilled role developed and supported through specialised training requiring knowledge and professional judgement on complex and emotive issues. It involves:

- The training of all school staff including support staff;
- Being available to discuss the Child Protection concerns of any member of staff;
- Responsibility for record keeping of all child protection concerns;
- Making referral to Social Services, when necessary;
- Liaison with the EA Designated Officers for Child Protection;
- Keeping the school Principal informed;
- The lead responsibility for the development of the school's Child Protection policy;
- Promotion of a Child Protection ethos in the school;
- Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection annually;
- Notifying the following of the Child Protection referrals:
 - The Child Protection Support Service for Schools;
 - The Chair of the Board of Governors and the Safeguarding Team

The Role of Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

The Role of all Staff

We in St Colmcille's High School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe through their preventative education curriculum.

All staff in St. Colmcille's, and any volunteers accepted to work in the school, will need to know the following:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of possible abuse;
- What the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures are, including the members of the Safeguarding Team, and what the reporting procedures are;
- How to talk to children about whom there are concerns in an appropriate way, and how to record the information they have acquired.

Signs and Symptoms of Possible Abuse

Within our relatively small school community, all members across our school staff are well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, or educational progress/development because of their day-to-day contact with individual children. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances, or drug, alcohol or solvent misuse. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse.

Some indicators of abuse may include:

- Bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities, or children with special educational needs are helped with toileting;
- Possible signs of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition, and of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention-seeking, may be noticeable;
- Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including withdrawal or inappropriate or advanced sexual behaviour.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. Also, it must be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described above.

Signs such as these described above and others can do no more than give rise to concern – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. All staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated.

Any concern should be recorded on the 'Note of Concern' (electronic copy located in Staff Documents (T drive) or hard copy located in Staff Room) and passed to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher.

Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse for staff.

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is **Mr D McVeigh**. In her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher, **Mrs F Coyne** will assume responsibility for Child Protection matters.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly by reporting the incident to the Designated Teacher immediately in writing, using the 'Note of Concern' proforma (located in the Child Protection folder in Staff Documents)**. This can be discussed with her and make and record only factual information (using the Note of Concern), including:

- the nature of the information;
- who gave it;
- the time, date and circumstances;
- where the concern relates to signs or symptoms of possible abuse, a description of these.

The reporting member of staff should not investigate – Concerns will be dealt with by the Designated Teacher and appropriate actions taken.

The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher should supplement the record with:

- details of any advice sought, from whom and when;
- the decision reached as to whether the case should be referred to Social Services; and, if so,
- how, when and by whom this was done;
- otherwise, reasons for not referring to Social Services.

The Designated Teacher and/or Deputy Designated Teacher may discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency in order to plan a course of action.

The Principal, in consultation with the Designated Teacher will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services and if so, a UNOCINI form will then be completed by the Designated Teacher.

If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.

Unless there are concerns that a parent, carer may be the possible abuser, in most circumstances the parents will be informed immediately but all subsequent actions taken will have the paramountcy of the child at the fore.

Therefore, when a decision to refer has been made, St. Colmcille's will consult with parent, carers unless by doing so, we put the child at further risk.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with [the Education Authority's] [CCMS's] Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and upon appropriate advice. **The child's welfare is paramount and is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Designated Teacher and/or Deputy Designated Teacher, in consultation with the Principal, will inform:

- Social Services
- The Education Authority's, CCMS's Designated Officer for Child Protection.

If a concern about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Designated Teacher, or the Principal (if the Designated Teacher is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the concern is about the Designated Teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

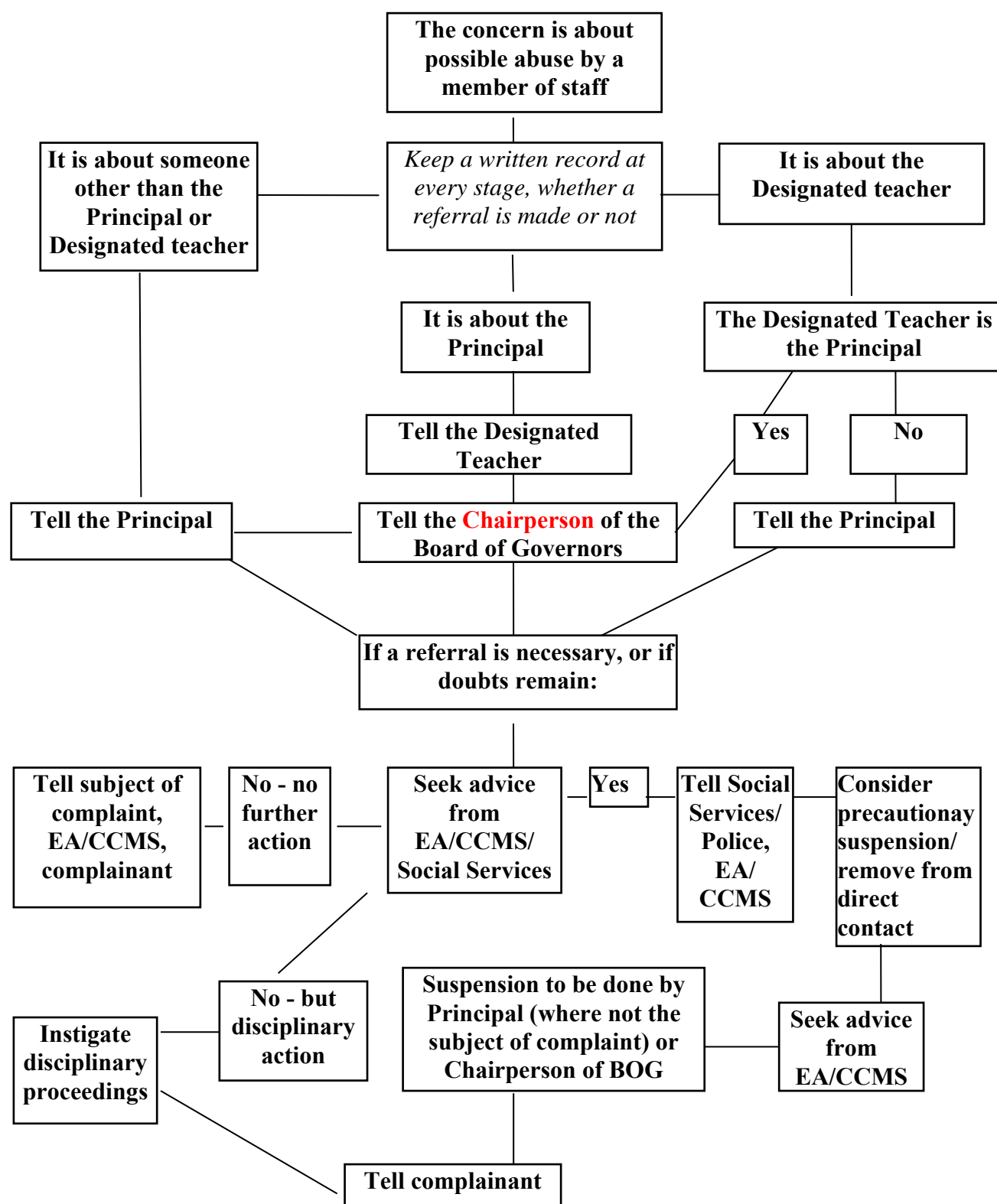
If a concern is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher (or her Deputy, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher.

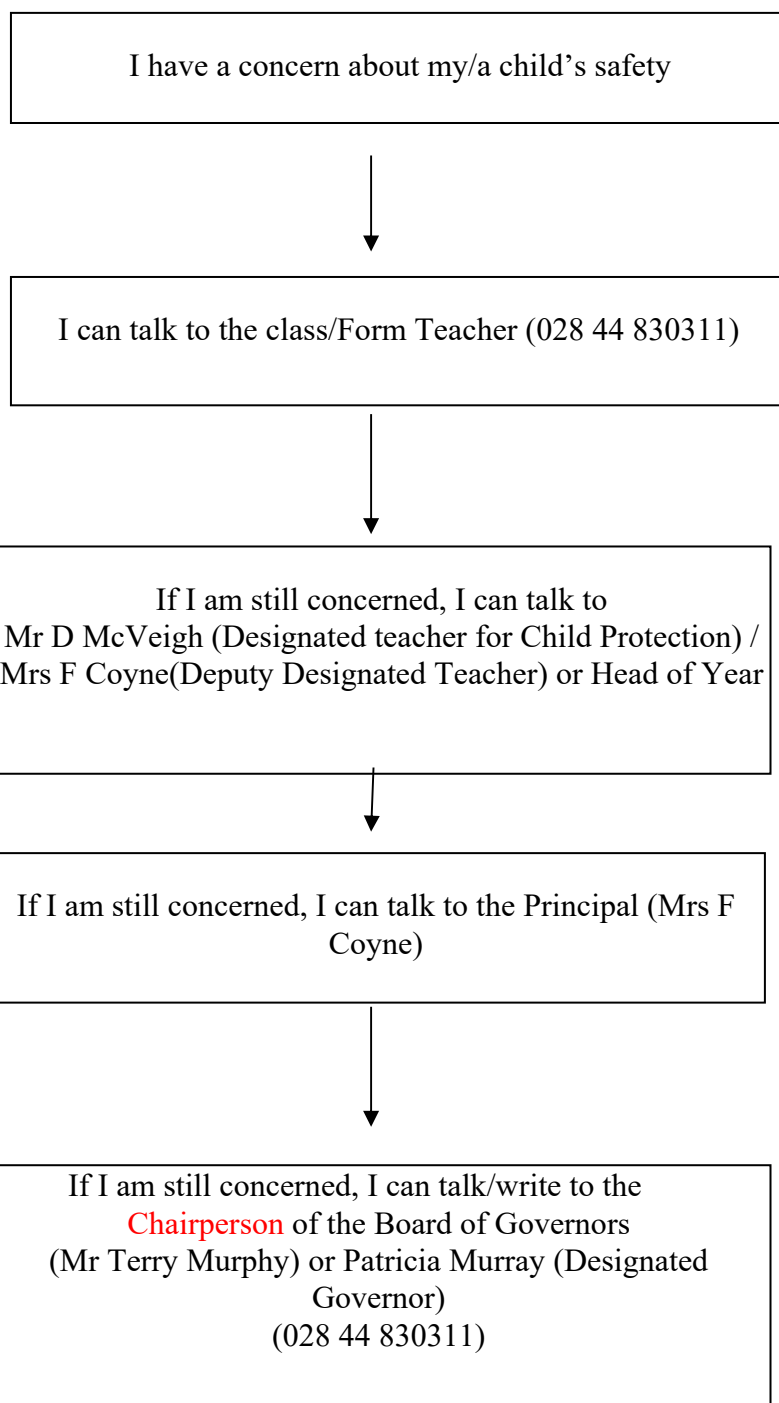
It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals, this will be on a 'need to know basis'.

Where domestic violence comes to our attention it will always be referred to Social Services.

Procedure where a concern has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff



How a parent can raise a concern about a child's safety



*At any time, I can talk to the Duty Social Worker on The Gateway Team
(Tel No: 0300 1000 300)
Or
(028 90 565444 out of hours)*

Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their every day responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information, some of which *may* need to be kept confidential to protect the child. Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or his/her family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. This means that staff should:

- Not share information about a pupil with any person, other than on a professional need-to-know basis.
- Never promise complete confidentiality to a pupil prior to, during or after a disclosure.
- Never pass on confidential information to outsiders, press, police, social services etc. without first seeking guidance from a Senior Member of Staff.
- Not share information about other staff with pupils.
- Pupils with sensitive Child Protection issues are indicated within our own filing system.

Preventative Education

Curriculum/Choice and Use of Teaching Material

Preventative education is used within the curriculum to promote healthy individuals both physically and mentally / emotionally in our school.

Preventative education taught within our curriculum aims to help young people deal with the real life issues they face growing up. The topics covered are important to our students' wellbeing and include: physical activity, sex and relationships, alcohol and drugs, nutrition, and general health and wellbeing. These topics are covered through our pastoral programme and through a variety of subjects across the curriculum.

Case Conferences

The Designated Teacher will manage all the correspondence regarding case conferences. Where attendance is not possible for the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, the Deputy Designated Teacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team will attend the Case Conference. In the event that no member of staff is available to attend, a report can be completed by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and forwarded to the social worker overseeing the case. Information should be forwarded to the Designated Teacher and filed as appropriate.

Parental Concern about Possible Child Abuse

Parents, carers need to know how they may report a concern and the recourse they have if they are not satisfied with the outcome. St. Colmcille's will include in their prospectus a summary of our arrangements for parents to make known to staff any concerns they may have about the safety of their (or another) child. Additionally, a hard copy summary of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be issued to all parents / carers, annually.

Summary

Procedures for Reporting Abuse

Reporting Arrangements for Schools

Within these arrangements, where the Designated Teacher is not the Principal, the Principal must be informed in every circumstance: -

- where staff suspect a case of child abuse they should immediately express their concern to Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher using the Note of Concern Proforma.
- in order to ensure the protection of the child and staff, it is essential that, where concern is expressed about suspected child abuse, a detailed written record is kept by the Designated Teacher;
- the Designated Teacher should consider the situation and, if appropriate pass on this concern to Social Services, the Board's Designated Officer and, where appropriate, the Diocesan Administrator;
- in the event of suspected cases of child abuse involving a member of staff in the school, the person who suspects this should follow procedure on the enclosed flow chart.



NOTE OF CONCERN – STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
CHILD PROTECTION RECORD – FACTUAL REPORTS TO BE PASSED TO
DESIGNATED/DEP. DESIGNATED TEACHER

PART 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY STAFF MEMBER

Name of Pupil(s) and Year Group:
Date, time of incident and/or disclosure: (factual information to be used)
Circumstances of incident/disclosure: (factual information to be used)
Nature and description of concern: (specific information/details)
Parties involved, including any witnesses to an incident and what was said or done and by whom:
Report passed by..... Received by..... Date Time.....

**Part 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE DESIGNATED / DEP. DESIGNATED
TEACHER**

Details of any advice sought, from whom and when: (eg. EA Officer for CP, CCMS Diocesan Officer, Social Services, PSNI etc.)

Action(s) taken:

Referral made: YES ☐ NO ☐

Outline Reasons:

Written information from staff member and/or agencies placed in pupil's Child Protection File

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Signature of Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Dep. Designated Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Code of conduct for Employees - Reference Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection (DENI 1999/ St Colmcille's High School.)

Introduction

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge **must be above reproach**. This **code of conduct** is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within our school. It is intended to:

- assist staff to be aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in a variety of scenarios, which may create vulnerable and/or abusive situations to your people or staff.
- communicate with staff expectations of their conduct as a member of the school community.
- safeguard all members of staff.

I. Code of Conduct

Private meetings with pupils

- A. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- B. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- C. Where possible another pupil or another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.
- D. Do not arrange meetings or tuition with individual pupils off the school premises in the evening/weekends or on the school premises at non-term time without the prior approval of the Principal and parents.

II. Physical Contact with Pupils

- A. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- B. Staff should never touch a child unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. Please refer to guidelines issued within the Pastoral Policy regarding the Use of Reasonable Force ie. the power of member(s) of staff to restrain pupils for safeguarding purposes.
- C. **Intimate Care** – Written permission for a child's Classroom Assistant to assist with any intimate care arrangements will be sought and parents or carers advised of the arrangements being put in place. On these occasions staff are advised to be sensitive to the child's needs and right to privacy when providing care. It is advisable that staff have another adult present/close by that they do not do anything for the child that they could do for themselves and that any such

incidents are recorded and parents or carers informed. Please see the Intimate Care Policy for guidance regarding this.

During any P.E. or sporting activities, physical contact should be kept to a minimum. Any contact will be in order to demonstrate techniques and keep children safe.

When accompanying children to changing facilities, either in school or at other venues, staff will be sensitive to the children's right to privacy whilst ensuring that the children's welfare and safety is maintained. Under normal circumstances it is best, to stay outside the changing rooms but in close proximity. A teacher will knock and give warning before entering a changing room and if possible only enter the changing room of children of the same gender. However, the children's safety is always of paramount concern and the teacher *may* need to enter on some occasions.

- D. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment.
- E. Physical punishment is illegal as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour.

First aid

- F. Whenever possible, First Aid should be administered to a pupil in the presence of other children/or an adult. However, no First Aid trained, member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- G. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a report of the incident should be submitted immediately to Principal.

III. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- A. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature please be extra cautious if this includes DVDs.
- B. If in doubt re appropriateness of a particular teaching material, please consult with the HOD/Principal before using it. It is useful to check DVDs with Designated Teacher.

IV. Relationships and Attitudes

Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, especially when dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

V. Confidentiality

- A. Treat information received about children and young people in a discreet and sensitive manner.
- B. Seek advice from a senior member of staff if in any doubt about sharing information which has been requested.
- C. Be cautious when passing information to others about a child/young person.
- D. Always refer any concerns about potential child abuse to the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher.

VI. Duty of Care

- A. Always act and be seen to act, in the child's best interest.
- B. Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question one's motives and intentions.
- C. Take responsibility for one's own actions and behaviour.

VII. Dress and Appearance

- A. Wear clothing which promotes a positive and professional image and is appropriate to their role. Through your attire you act as role models to prepare children for the world of work.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelates with children and young people.

However, in all circumstances, employees' professional judgement should be exercised and for the vast majority of employees, this code of conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their everyday practice.

Please note if you are using volunteers for sporting activities/help on school trips there is a special form and code of conduct for them. Check via Mr D McVeigh, Mrs F Coyne or the Principal. All must be Child Protection checked.

Appendix C

Guidelines within the school's Code of Conduct for those who work with children and young people outline the expectations which staff should adhere to in ensuring appropriate levels of safeguarding and child protection are maintained.

Guidelines for the use of Social Networking Websites and Communication Technology

Social networking is everywhere. It is common to find parents, children, co-workers and others on such sites. With social networks people across the world have access to tools and options to connect and, with this, comes the potential to be compromised or to get into potential danger. One thing we often forget while having fun on social networks is that almost anybody can see what we are doing. While we are tagging photos for our friends or are posting comments to them, it can be easy to forget that someone else who has been invited onto a social networking site can also view them.

Once something appears on the Internet, it's almost impossible to remove. As these sites continue to grow in popularity, so too does the value of the information on them to parties other than those directly involved. Social networking users need to take a step back and think about just what they are posting onto the Internet.

People who work with children and young people should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid improper contact or relationships inside or outside of school and uphold their position of trust.

With regard to relationships, individuals who work with children and young people should not attempt to establish an inappropriate relationship which might include:

- communication of a personal nature
- inappropriate dialogue through the internet
- the sending of emails or text messages of an inappropriate nature

Individuals who work with children and young people, should be extremely careful in corresponding with people on social networking sites. Staff relationships with children and young people should at all times remain professional and they should **not** correspond with children and young people through such sites or add them as 'friends'. Any incidents where they have been requested by a pupil to add them to their 'friends' list should be declined **and immediately reported** to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection for follow up action. It is worth bearing in mind that on such sites an inappropriate or even misconstrued communication may have the potential to impact upon careers or even result in criminal investigation.

In addition, staff should bear in mind who may access their own profiles on such websites and should therefore take care as to the information they display about themselves and their personal lives. They should also ensure that they have installed and are using the appropriate privacy settings.

Guidelines for the Use of Images of Pupils

The Data Protection Act (DPA) and Human Rights Legislation require that the school take care in the use of photographs, videos and web cams in the school environment.

- All photographs held on file (both electronic and paper) of the pupils exist in accordance with the DPA.
- Photographs and videos of the pupils taken during the year to promote the school for publicity use in the prospectus or in other printed material, will be subject to annual written consent by the parents / carers. Images being used will portray the pupils appropriately attired.
- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded.
- Avoid making images in one to one situations.
- Digital video recordings may be made at various functions or of class activities. These can help encourage creativity, motivate and enthuse pupils and improve communication, team-working skills and may be used for assessment purposes.
- Photographs of school staff will only be used with the consent of that staff member.
- Photographs taken for the purpose of journalism are exempt from the DPA and on all occasions the pupils will be aware that their photograph may be used.
- Photographs or film footage by parents or guardians of their child(ren) *only* at school events is permitted under an exemption in the DPA. This would need to be agreed in advance with relevant school staff.
- The use of camera phones or the intent to send offensive pictures to other pupils is not permitted and will be dealt with under the Discipline Code.
- Any incident of improper use of photographs should be reported to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher immediately.

To summarise:

Any individual, who works with children and young people and others, with whom they may be in a position of trust, should exercise caution when using social networking sites and avoid inappropriate communication of any kind;

Any individual, who work with children and young people, should not make, view or access illegal or inappropriate images.

For additional guidance, please refer to the following school documents:

Positive Discipline Policy;

Use of Reasonable Force Policy;

Intimate Care Policy;

ICT Policy;

Staff Code of Conduct